

City of Rockville Environment Commission

Sustainable Development and Energy Committee (SDEC)

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, December 20, 2011

Diamondback Terrapin Room, City Hall

7:00 pm

1. Welcome / Agenda Review/Minutes Adoption

- In attendance: Clark Reed, John Becker, Lea Rosenbohm, Herb Winkler and staff liaison Erica Shingara.
- Guests: Doug Weisburger (Montgomery County Department of Environmental Protection), Linda Ekizian (Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce) and Andrea Jolly (Rockville Chamber of Commerce).
- The meeting convened at 7:05 by Chair Reed.

2. Montgomery County Green Business Certification Program

- Doug Weisburger presented an overview of Montgomery County's Green Business Certification Program (<http://mcgreenbiz.org/>). The program was created by Montgomery County, Montgomery College, and the Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce at the request of the business community to provide third party certification of green business practices. It focuses on day-to-day operations and policies (distinctive from LEED's focus on building construction and major systems). Certification is available for businesses that are large /small as well as tenant/owner-occupied offices. Certification requires the completion of 70 to 120 actions (depending on business size) in seven categories: organization commitment, waste reduction and recycling, environmentally responsible purchasing, energy efficiency and renewable energy, efficient runoff management and water use, pollution prevention, and transportation and travel. The website provides a description of each green action and links to resources to help a business achieve the action. Training is also provided by Montgomery College. 34 businesses have achieved certification within the last 2 years (8 with Rockville addresses). The application is available online and a third party contractor performs a field visit to verify actions. The County recognizes the business on their web site. Home based businesses are not eligible at this point in time. The County is interested in expanding marketing and business sectors (such as green landscaping, restaurants and property managers).
- Linda Ekizian described the Chamber's experience going through certification as well as feedback from the business community. The certification program has helped the Chamber focus their efforts and has changed staff behavior. Businesses that come to the Chamber also see the program in action. Benefits of the program include County recognition, financial savings, and a competitive advantage. The program may also help businesses meet federal green contracting requirements. Montgomery College offers a quarterly training webinar on the certification process. The next training is on January 19th.

- Andrea Jolly indicated that member business have expressed interest in greening day-to-day operations. However, it is important to distinguish the green business certification program from the green building tax credit proposal in order to avoid confusion. The Chamber could explore hosting an informational event on the program.
- Lea Rosenbohm researched the requirements to earn credit for a green business certification program under the Sustainable Maryland Certified program. The options are to create a new program or partner with an existing. Creating a new program would involve significantly more resources and time to create program criteria, attract partners, develop a web platform, marketing strategy, etc.). Duplicating the program may also not be valuable to the business community. Partnering with Montgomery County and the Chamber to promote the program and helping to contribute to program expansion may earn the SMC credit and provide larger community benefits.
- The SDEC will work with the Environment Commission to explore possible partnership opportunities in time for April 2012 (Earth Day activities). Opportunities may include working with Cable TV to highlight a Rockville Certified Business (Congressional Bank, Good Will), promote the program on web and RR, work with the Chamber to host an information session, help develop a sector specific checklist with stakeholder involvement (restaurants), and help to recognize certified green businesses with an Environmental Excellence Award.

3. Minutes Adoption/Environment Commission & Environmental Management Division Report/SMC update

- The October minutes were approved.
- Erica Shingara provided an update on the Sustainable Maryland Certified program.
 - The online SMC Community Sustainability survey is planned to be released in January. Committee members are encouraged to promote survey participation. Survey results should be ready by mid-February.
 - Staff spoke with SMC about the number of points that can be achieved in the first year. At this point, certification is just at 150 points and there is not special recognition for achieving the largest number of points. So there does not appear to be a benefit in submitting the maximum number of points at this time.
 - The Green Team should focus on completing write-ups for the mandatory items and some of the completed actions by January or February.
 - This will allow members with other adopted actions more time and flexibility to work on the actions and application submittals. Many of the SDEC adopted actions can be worked on throughout 2012 and be ready for the 2013 application.
- Discussion on other agenda items was tabled until the next meeting.

4. Member News / Announcements / Upcoming Events

- None

5. Wrap-up and Adjourn

The next SDEC meeting is tentatively scheduled for **Tuesday, January 17, 2012** at Rockville City Hall. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:20 pm.